

Representative Mark Ericks

2008 Session Report to the 1st District



May, 2008



State Representative Mark Ericks

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Committee Assignments:
Appropriations Subcommittee
on General Government &
Audit Review, *Vice-Chair*
Appropriations
Finance
Rules

Dear friends and neighbors,

Now that the 2008 Legislative Session has wrapped-up, we can take a look back at all the progressive steps we made to better the State of Washington.

But before we get into some of the details of this year's session, I want to pass on a bit of good news that will make you proud of living in this state. The first week of March the Pew Center for the States released its state governments scorecard and Washington is among the top three. The center ranked the states based on how well they manage their budgets, staffs, infrastructure and information. According to the report, the states with the highest scores have made accountability and innovation

a priority. To learn more about how we got an A- on the Pew Center report card, please go to: http://www.pewcenteronthestates.org/gpp_report_card.aspx

Even though this was a short session, we hammered out a lot of bills that the citizens of our state will benefit from. And one of the issues that I hope to tackle again is the protection of homeowners' rights, as well as the rights of the good builders and contractors. As new neighborhoods are developed in parts of King and Snohomish counties, we must be diligent to ensure the protection of all parties involved. For the homeowners, we want to make sure that they are not using their savings to buy a defective home; and for the contractors, we want to make sure that additional regulations are targeted to support the good contractors and builders.

This year we wrote supplemental budgets that expanded the important investments we made in 2007. As a member of the House Appropriations committee, I prioritized health care issues, education, environmental stewardship, housing, and keeping our communities safe, but it was also essential we maintain a rainy day fund: our budget included \$850 million in total reserves. While our economy remains strong, keeping a solid reserve is the responsible thing to do as we see how the weaker national economy is going to affect us.

There are many more accomplishments outlined in this newsletter, so please feel free to read on. On this occasion, due to election year restrictions, I can't include a tear-out section for you to send me back with your comments and questions, so please feel free to give me a call, send me an email or a letter with your concerns and ideas.

Thank you for giving me the honor of serving you in state government.

Sincerely,

K-12 and Higher Education

This session we passed several bills to help kids graduate, and then continue on to further education. Highlights include:

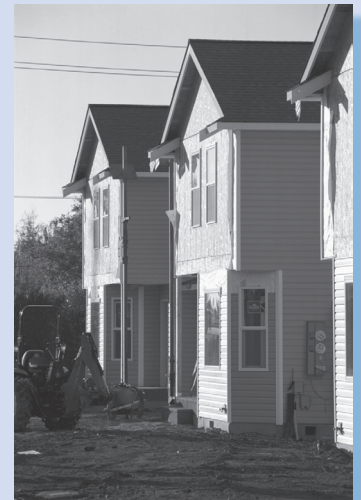
- **SB 6534** - Revises Math Standards that will align with the skills and knowledge students need in today's complex world.
- **HB 2598** - Explores the creation of an on-line Math Curriculum for grades K-12 that will be aligned to the new state mathematics learning standards.
- **HB 3166** - Improves the WASL by shortening the test and creating an end-of-course assessment in Algebra I, Geometry and Integrated Math I & II.
- **SB 6673** - Expands student learning opportunities for high schools kids who are at risk of not graduating.
- **SB 6377** - Enhances Career & Technical Education in secondary schools and sets the vision for the future of CTE programs by addressing improvements, enhancing funding, and providing incentives.
- **HB 2582** - Expands the availability of childcare on campuses throughout the state so that parents of young children can attend college.
- **HB 2641** - Establishes performance agreements that set an audit process for the state's four-year colleges and universities. This measuring system will reassure taxpayers that our institutions of higher education are meeting the goals established by the Legislature.
- **SB 6187** - Creates the food animal veterinarian conditional scholarship, which includes poultry, cattle, swine, and sheep.
- **SB 6328** - Addresses campus security to carry out policies and procedures for preventing and responding to violent incidents on college campuses while ensuring communication with students, faculty and staff.
- **SB 6371** - Clarifies eligibility requirements of tuition waivers for families of eligible veterans and National Guard members.



Mortgage Crisis and Affordable Housing

To better protect consumers in our state, this year we passed a package of bills that offers protections from subprime loans and deceptive lending practices, including:

- **SB 6381** - Creates fiduciary duties for mortgage brokers, ensuring that they look out for the interest of borrowers.
- **SB 6471** - Protects consumers by closing a loophole between federal and state jurisdictions and requires all mortgage brokers be regulated by the State Department of Financial Institutions.
- **HB 2770** - Sets up limits on pre-payment penalties and forbids brokers from tricking unwary borrowers into accepting a subprime loan when they know that the borrower is qualified for a lower interest loan.
- **HB 2791** - Helps prevent scam artists from preying on people who are at risk of losing their homes, attempting to rob them of the equity they have worked hard to build up. This measure requires increased notice to homeowners at risk of foreclosure that the "mortgage rescuer" could end up owning their home. It provides a five-day cancellation of the contract with the so-called rescuer and the owner, and increased protections if the rescuer subsequently tries to evict the original owner.
- **SB 6272** - Expands financial literacy through education and counseling to promote greater homeownership security.
- **HB 2014** - Requires landlords to provide tenants with relocation compensation for condominium conversions and extends the time period that tenants have to move out to 120 days. It also allows cities to restrict the number of condominium conversions.



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Climate Change



The environment is always a hot issue in the Legislature. The work we did this session is reflected in measures that continue to keep Washington state as a leader in taking action against climate change by passing:

- **HB 2815** - Requires reduction of greenhouse gases by 50% below 1990 levels by 2050 and provides funding for green collar jobs. We're aware of the importance of developing a green workforce and we're leading the nation by passing this bill.
- **SB 6580** - Requires the Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development to provide municipalities with a tool to measure greenhouse gas emissions, and establishes a competitive grant program to give funds to municipalities implementing programs to fight climate change.

Health Care

We're continuously working to improve our state's health care system so that all Washingtonians can have access to affordable health care. This year we passed legislation that brings us closer to that goal.



- **SB 6333** - Creates the Citizens' Work Group on Health Care Reform, which authorizes a detailed analysis of leading health care reform models and requires engaging the public in developing recommendations for comprehensive reform.
- **SB 2537** - Last session we passed a bill to create the Health Insurance Partnership (HIP), a public-private marketplace to make health insurance coverage more affordable and accessible for small employers. This session the HIP board requested modifications to ensure that the program could be implemented successfully. We made those changes and HIP is on track to start enrolling small businesses and their employees in January 2009, with coverage beginning March 2009.
- **SB 5261** - Gives the insurance commissioner authority to review the rate increases of health benefit plans; this measure was necessary because rates have increased dramatically since the authority stopped regulating it.

2007-2008 Capital Budget Projects in the 1st District

(Shaded item is 2008 addition)

Dept. of Community, Trade & Economic Development	
Northshore Performing Arts	350,000
Bothell Crossroads/State Route 522	
Realignment	7,000,000
Friends of Hidden River - Brightwater.....	675,000
Brightwater Environmental Education	
Center and Energy Test Bed.....	270,000

University of Washington

UW Bothell Phase 3	150,000
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State Board for Community and Technical Colleges

Cascadia: Center for Arts,	
Technology, Communication.....	32,636,000
Cascadia (Minor Works Program)	354,200
Cascadia (Minor Works Preservation)	98,500

Total 1st Legislative District (2007-2008)

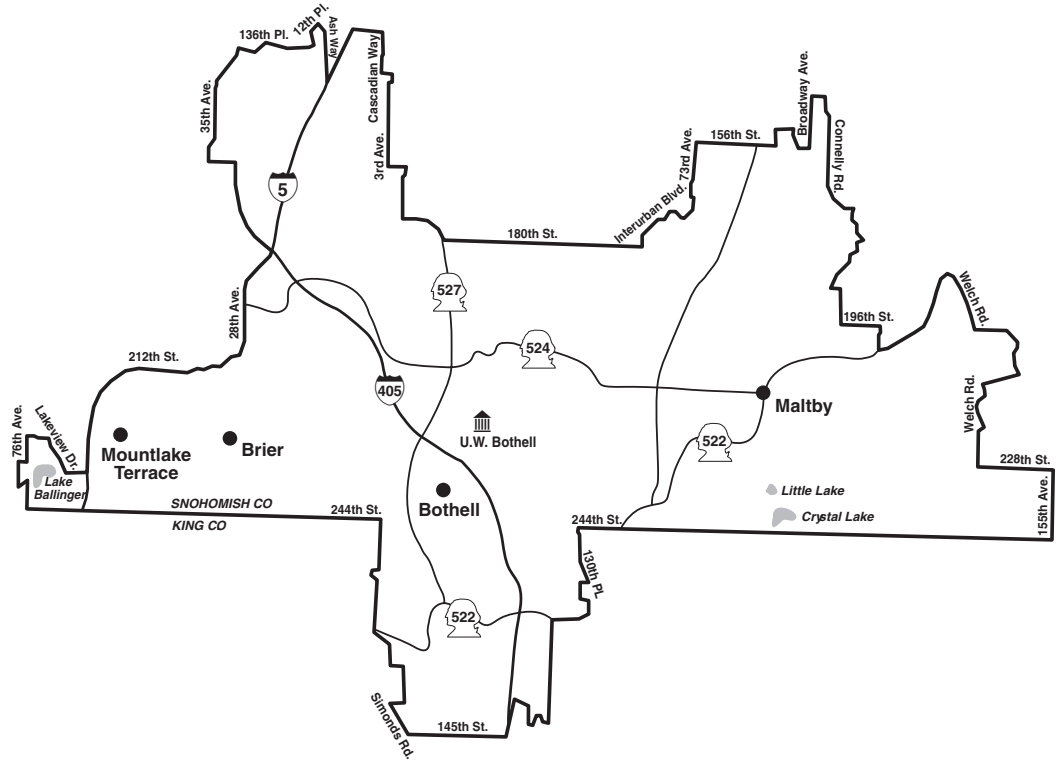
.....**41,533,700**

Be sure to visit my website at www.housedemocrats.wa.gov/members/ericks/ where you'll find information on issues that matter to our community.

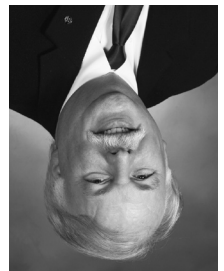


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Printed on recycled paper

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